

## **Minutes - Social Justice Commission Meeting Sunday, February 8, 2026**

*The St. Thomas More Social Justice Commission strives to put Faith into Action, serving all Creation with a keen awareness of Catholic Social Teaching.*

- 1. Opening Prayer** - Cole Arthur Riley "For Service"
- 2. Welcoming of New Members** - No new members present
- 3. Approval of December Meeting Minutes** - No changes

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- 4. Brochure Holders** are installed next to the Fair Trade display shelf. Community support organizations' pamphlets are available for information and volunteer opportunities.

### **NEW/ONGOING BUSINESS:**

- 5. Table of Grace and Inside Out update** - Tracy Lees  
STM Table of Grace meal was on Jan 25th, very little food was left (Walking Tacos are very popular!).  
Inside out is in need of backpacks and supplies - needs list will be sent, STM will repeat a backpack drive as part of the Lenten Works of Mercy project.
- 6. February Tithing Grants** - Moving to March. Application forms available on the STM website (Home page and Social Justice webpage) and paper copies on Welcome desk.
- 7. Lenten Works of Mercy Projects** (Feb 18 to April 2, 2026)
  - Additional help needed.
    - Recommendations to date:
      - Open Heartland - Kim and Tom are meeting with Deb Dunkhase next week to discuss needs list and ways STM can help.
      - Inside Out - Backpack Drive
      - Big Brothers/Big Sisters? - [Bowl for Kids' Sake](#)
      - IC Compassion\_- Immigrant support (food and legal aid)
      - Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice
      - Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County
      - The Healing Prairie Farm
      - Covenant House
      - FINCA
      - Rice Bowl
      - Death Cafe
    - Kim, Linda and Mary M. will work on this project. Please submit ideas for organizations/projects and contact if you would like to be involved

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### 8. Sunday Afternoon Lent Series - Ideas discussed, including:

- [No Other Land](#) - Film screening of Oscar nominated documentary about Israeli- Palestinian conflict - will need to pay for showing film, arrange a time and confirm location, possible speaker/brief presentation.
- [Jorge Lopez](#) - US/Mexican border experience.
- [Program with Stephen Ministry](#) highlighting some areas of needed volunteers in the community (working with Joann Miller)
- [Sr. Helen Prejean, is speaking at Mount Mercy in Cedar Rapids on April 13 at 6:00 p.m.](#) - (this is after Easter - Register [HERE](#))
- Spring Break is during Lent, so only 4 full weekends are available.
- Consider recording speakers sessions.

9. [Bread For The World Offering of Letters](#) - Linda Myers will attend opening session (online, 2/10/26) and follow up with legislative updates and recommended letters. A morning of letter-writing to be planned for after Lent.

10. [Rice Bowl \(Catholic Relief Services\)](#) - Diocese of Davenport coordinates parishes, Tom will confirm with Maricarla. SJ Commission to help, if needed.

### 11. Development of *St Thomas More LGBTQ+ Ministry*

- Monthly meetings with church and offsite locations. Adam Summers will coordinate, with STM parish email account set up if possible. Bulletin and website announcements to come. Tom following through with Marianne Agnoli at the Diocesan Family Life office.
- Draft statement of purpose:
  - St. Thomas More is committed to the full inclusion and participation of all its members, recognizing that each of us is made in the image and likeness of our loving God. We are grateful for the presence and witness of our LGBTQ community.  
All are welcome: *Todos, todos, todos.*  
The STM LGBTQ Ministry seeks to be a safe space of authenticity and belonging for LGBTQ people within our larger community. We gather for faith sharing, social gatherings, and book study, and we collaborate with other faith communities and organizations in lifting up the dignity of LGBTQ people and families.

### 9. Fairtrade Sales – This weekend sales were close to \$900

Dates for future sales - ?before Mother's Day  
Additional products from Guatemala, Milwaukee Franciscans for Peace are available now. Other Guatemalan items from artist co-op supporting the elderly in Guatemala will be ordered through their partner in Sioux Falls.

### 10. Catholic Worker House Meals -

Next meals: [March 1, 2026](#) (Walking Tacos!)

[April](#) - (Easter Sunday) Tom and Kim will provide Hams, send out sign up for bringing side dishes and serving.

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**11. SAGES - February/March - Wisdom Jesus by Cynthia Bourgeault**

**12. Racial Equity Initiative - (Joann Miller)**

- a. **Retreat** - for planning and rejuvenation, Saturday,
  - i. February 14th, 8:30 am to noon, STM MPR
  - ii. RSVP [HERE](#)
- b. Upcoming events include Stations of the Cross during Lent and planning for Juneteenth.

**13. Green Team -**

- a. Planning and assessment of grounds continues including tree planting and possible prairie area
- b. Recycling Sign Up available from Judy Frits

**2026 PLANNING:**

**14. Emphasis on Catholic Social Teaching Education and Awareness**

**Monthly** - pulpit announcement, bulletin submission, short discussion in meeting (EFJ Resources)

Note how each of our initiatives reflect intentions of CST

[Catholic Social Teaching in a Year](#)

**15. Collaboration/Organization of Initiatives - additional help needed to contact other commissions and STM groups.**

How do we prevent duplication of efforts and coordinate projects with multiple commissions. How best to respond to requests from parishioners?

What should the focus of Social Justice be?

**16. Future Initiatives - Shared Spreadsheet [Social Justice Commission Initiatives](#)**

**17. Next Meeting - Monday March 9, 2026 7 PM MPR (upstairs)**

**18. Future Meetings - (9:45 AM in church MPR unless otherwise noted)**

- March 9, 2026 **\*\*Mon 7 PM**
- April 12, 2026
- May 11, 2026 **\*\*Monday 7PM**
- June 14, 2026
- July 12, 2026
- August 9, 2026
- September 13, 2026